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## **Institute of Public Health Newsletter- volume1, Issue1**

Institute of Public Health (IPH) - CMHS  
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# Institute of Public Health Newsletter

**ELPIDOFOROS S. SOTERIADES**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

I am pleased to introduce the first issue of our Institute of Public Health (IPH) Newsletter. We are planning to devote each issue to a major public health problem in order to explore opportunities for cooperation and synergistic activities in both teaching and research with members of the broad IPH academic network. Not surprisingly, we are devoting this first issue to smoking as the most widespread preventable cause of cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Tobacco control constitutes the single most important intervention to improve the health of the public on a global scale. This is particularly important for the young generation who is now facing new challenges with the multitude of smoking products surfaced in the global market including e-cigarette, midwakh, waterpipe, heated tobacco and many more. Public health professionals have an outmost responsibility to increase their efforts in order to address these dangerous challenges and improve the health of our children.



## SPECIAL FOCUS ON TOBACCO CONTROL

IPH organized a Tobacco Control Symposium on February 9th in the Yanah Theater. Associate Professor Mohammed Al Houqani from the department of Internal Medicine spoke on Midwakh smoking and an international speaker, Assistant Professor Paraskevi Katsaounou from the University of Athens School of Medicine talked about nicotine addiction and smoking cessation (page 2).

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Marilia Silva Paulo

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## Volume 1, Issue 1

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## SCIENTIFIC NEWS

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Medical students' research survey on tobacco use among University Students in UAE
- Tobacco Control Symposium
- Highlights of the month

## SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS/AWARDS



Dr Javaid Nauman published a in the top 1% scientific journals. Thank you for a great work and excellent representation of IPH and our College! (Picture above)

On February 4th, Prof Michal Grivna, Prof Syed Shah, Prof Muhammad Abid and PhD Student Mariam Al Shamsi attended a meeting at the National Rehabilitation Center in Abu Dhabi to discuss research collaboration and training opportunities. (Picture below)



Dr Mohamed Sheek-Hussein at CDC Atlanta, USA, for the 4th Global National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Meeting (NITAGs). (Picture below)



Dr Rami H. Al-Rifai published in the top 5% scientific journals. Thank you for a great work and excellent representation of IPH and our College! (Picture above)



On February 27th, Dr Sonia El-zaemey, Prof Michal Grivna, Dr Husam Mohamed Bakhit, Dr Mohamed El Sadig and Dr Elpidoforos Soteriades hosted a meeting with the Al Ain Municipality to undertake a collaborative occupational health research study on immigrant workers in Al Ain. (Picture above)



The Inception workshop on diet and obesity prevention organized by College of Food and Agriculture on February 16th, attended by Prof. Shah, Dr El-Sadig and Prof Grivna. (Picture above)

Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai, received the second prize for the best oral presentation from the Emirates Diabetes Association. His oral presentation discussed the "burden of T2DM and Pre-DM in the MENA region from 2000-2018" and was delivered during the 10th Emirates Diabetes and Endocrine Congress held in Dubai 27-29 Feb 2020. (Picture below)



IPH monthly Department meeting. (Picture below)



## PUBLIC HEALTH SEMINARS

### WORK, SLEEP AND HEALTH

05th January 2020

Professor Nicola Magnavita from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) of Rome (Italy) has visited the IPH and gave a Seminar on Sleep disorders at CMHS, as part of the IPH Seminar Series.



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### FROM GLOBAL HEALTH POLITICAL AGENDAS TO THE HEALTH SYSTEM OF ABU DHABI

5th February 2020

Dr Marilia Silva Paulo, was invited for the Seminar of Series of the Department of Government and Society from the College of Humanities and Social Science.



### NICOTINE ADDICTION AS A CHRONIC DISEASE: THERAPEUTIC MODALITIES

9th February 2020

Dr Paraskevi Katsaounou, Pulmonary Medicine Specialist from the University of Athens talked about smoking cessation as part of the Tobacco Workshop organized by the IPH.



### MIDWAKH SMOKING IN THE UAE

9th February 2020

Dr Mohammed Al Houqani, from the Department of Internal Medicine, CMHS, presented a lecture on Midwash smoking as part of the Tobacco Workshop organized by the IPH.

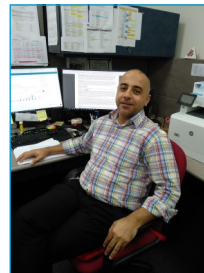




## TOBACCO USE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE UAE

Tobacco use is a major public health concern killing nearly 6 million people annual on a global scale. More than 5 million of these deaths are the result of direct tobacco use, while more than 600,000 are due to exposure to second- and third-hand smoke. Tobacco products are being sold in various shapes and forms even to underage children. Midwakh, for example is a special device used to smoke tobacco that is quite popular in the GCC countries but equally dangerous for health. In addition, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) including e-cigarettes and e-hookahs are penetrating youth groups and are rapidly emerging as a public health concern, worldwide.

Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai, an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, at the Institute of Public Health, is leading a cross-sectional survey in the UAE on tobacco smoking among university students. This ongoing survey covers university students in three main universities in the UAE; the UAE University; Zayed University; and the University of Sharjah. The survey is expected to provide prevalence estimates on the use of various forms of tobacco products. Findings will help shaping future public health interventions and strategies; eventually alleviating unfavorable health outcomes associated with tobacco use among one of the most vital population groups in UAE, the university students.



## 3RD GLOBAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Road traffic injuries (RTI) remain a major public health challenge. Each year, 1.35 million people die on the roads. RTI are the most common cause of death among young people globally. Last year, the UN General Assembly designated Sweden as a host of the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. The conference, organized together with the WHO, was a milestone in global road safety and marked the end of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, in February 19-20. Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf in his opening remarks pledged governments to accelerate actions. Prof. Michal Grivna, director of the Institute of Public Health, was invited by the Swedish government to participate in this conference along with more than 70 ministers and 1,700 worldwide experts. Road safety is now included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Conference participants arrived at a Stockholm Declaration aiming to ensure adequate political action and advance multi-sectoral collaboration in order to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% over the next decade.



### UAEU GRANT

Dr Luai A. Ahmed and Dr Abderrahim Oulhaj have been awarded a collaborative research grant from the UAEU on **Application of Artificial Intelligence in Data Quality Management and Clinical Decision Support in the Mutaba'ah Mother and Child Health Study**. A collaborative proposal between the Mutaba'ah Study and the College of Information of Technology, UAEU.

### CMHS COLLEGE GRANT

Dr Javaid Nauman received the CMHS College grant— 2020 funding for a research proposal that will “**A workplace exercise intervention in Dubai to improve cardio-metabolic health: randomized controlled trial**”.

### CMHS COLLEGE GRANT

Dr Rami H. Al-Rifai received the CMHS College grant-2020 funding for a research proposal that will “**Summarize the strength of association between maternal body weight and C-section delivery in the MENA region using the systematic review and meta-analysis methodology**”.

## INTERVIEW WITH PROF SYED M. SHAH

### HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

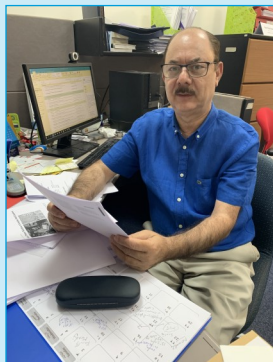
#### JANUARY

Dr Marilia Silva Paulo was appointed as a new Instructor at the Institute of Public Health in January 2020. She holds a PhD in International Health from Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal.



#### FEBRUARY

Prof Syed Shah has published a media covered article in PLOS One scientific journal. The study is entitled “Self-esteem and other risk factors for depressive symptoms among adolescents in United Arab Emirates”.



**Dr Marilia Silva Paulo:** *Can you please tell us about yourself?*

**Prof Syed M Shah:** I grew up in a remote rural village at the foothills of Himalayan mountains in north Pakistan. My parents had no formal education, as there was no school during their time but they were wise enough to send me to school in my village to complete high-school education. With scholarship support, I completed my medical education from Khyber Medical College Peshawar, and an MPH in International Health and PhD in Epidemiology from School of Public Health, Houston, the University of Texas, USA.

**MSP:** *Why did you choose the specialty of Public Health? What was your experience in the field including your clinical work?*

**SMS:** I joined Aga Khan University (AKU), the first private University in Pakistan, established by Prince Karim Aga Khan, the Chancellor of AKU, as part of a network of universities in United Kingdom, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan, and the University of Central Asia in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. I spent three years in Family Medicine, taking care of patients at ambulatory clinics. I was inspired by the work of John H Bryant, a global leader in Public Health who joined AKU as the Chair of Community Health Sciences (CHS), to translate the vision of Alma Ata Declaration of “Health for All”. Under his leadership, we were able to establish Primary Health Care (PHC) models of health delivery for both the urban and rural populations of Pakistan in close partnership with government and community leaders. These sites served well to teach community medicine to both medical and nursing students.

**MSP:** *How is your daily work schedule?*

**SMS:** As a faculty in academic setting it remains a challenge to maintain the balance between academic work and family life. I try to maintain 60 minutes of walk after early morning prayers, and try to be in touch with my three kids studying in British Columbia, Toronto and Montreal, in Canada.

**MSP:** *What are your most important achievements?*

**SMS:** As the saying goes, charity begins at home. As the first PhD graduate from my region I was able to provide financial support and guidance to my younger family members as well as promising youth from my region.

Five of my family members completed their PhD level education from USA, Australia and Malaysia. During my ten years tenure at Aga Khan University, there were several examples of achievement. I directed and taught Regional Epidemiology & Surveillance Training course with the financial support from USAID and we were able to train 300 frontline health managers from the Indian subcontinent, East Africa, Afghanistan and Central Asia. I directed one of the five PHC modules, serving a population of 50,000, with three religious background, Muslims, Hindus and Christians in one of urban squatter settlement of Karachi. We were able to reduce infant mortality from 158 to 60 per 1000 over five years with total cost of five US cents per person per year. This achievement strengthened my belief in the promise of public health in protecting and prolonging life. I contributed in a School Nutrition Program to improve nutrition and school retention with funding support from the World Bank in four rural districts and we got very successful results after four years of intervention. This program was replicated all over the country. In Canada, I served for four years and was awarded the best Mentorship Award by Canadian Coalition for Global Health. In UAE University I have contributed in publishing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Monogram on development of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) risk factors in children and adolescents from a cohort study, the Project HeartBeat! In addition, we were able to document cardio-metabolic risk factors in immigrant populations. World Heart Federation selected me as an Emerging Leader for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention in the region. I also received the Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Student Mentorship for mentoring one of MPH students at Michigan State University, USA.

**MSP:** *Who is your personal and professional role models?*

**SMS:** Prince Karim Aga Khan is my role model as he is representing the contribution of Muslim society, though a number of Aga Khan Foundation initiatives such as Islamic Architecture Award, Islamic Music Award, and bridging the gap between East and West through a number of educational and civil society initiatives.



**MSP:** *What are your plans for the future?*

**SMS:** I was recently selected for the one-year Harvard Global Clinical Scholars Research Training Program from the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU). During my training, I had the opportunity to visit the Harvard main campus and was highly impressed by the words of wisdom engraved on the gates of Harvard main campus; “enter to grow in wisdom” and “go to serve the people and thy kind”. This has been my mission since then, aiming to serve my fellow high-

mountain villagers of Gilgit, Baltistan during my summer vacation. I also plan to apply for external grants to support promising PhD students at the Institute of Public Health. Finally, I plan to involve both undergraduate and graduate students to publish my research work.

## INTERVIEW WITH PHD STUDENT NASLOON ALI

**Dr Elpidoforos S. Soteriades:** *What is your educational background?*

**Nasloon Ali:** My Bachelor degree was in Biomedical Engineering with a focus on genetic epidemiology. I then went on to do a Master's in Public Health and Epidemiology from the University of Dundee, United Kingdom. Prior to my arrival in UAE, I have worked as an epidemiologist at a tertiary hospital in Singapore for three years.

**ESS:** *What do you like best from IPH?*

**NA:** I began working as a Research Associate at the Institute of Public Health with Dr. Luai Ahmed, Dr Tom Loney and Prof Iain Blair, the previous chairman of the Institute. I had such a wonderful experience and was impressed by these faculty members who were invested in the growth of their students and accepting of their flaws, that I decided to continue my studies. It was like a big family with everyone looking out for each other. I found the Institute of public health, the College of Medicine and Health Sciences and the whole university community to be warm, friendly and multicultural, providing me with a conducive environment that was stimulating, both intellectually and socially.

**ESS:** *Why did you choose to enroll in the doctoral program?*

**NA:** I have a sincere interest in maternal health. As one of the pioneering members of the largest maternal and child cohort study established in the country - the Mutaba'ah study, I felt that I could be an asset to the team and make the best of my time as a doctoral candidate. Dr Luai, the PI of the project and my supervisor, is extremely knowledgeable and devoted mentor helping to grow at the academic level. It was an opportunity I could not resist.

**ESS:** *What is the focus of your doctoral thesis research?*

**NA:** My thesis is on the impact of recurrent

miscarriage (RM) on the characteristics, behaviors and outcomes of future pregnancies. Although, as the first PhD student of the study, I was given the prestigious opportunity to choose from a vast field of related topics, I felt RM deserved a spotlight in the country.

Dr Luai has been pivotal in refining my topic and ensuring that the correct methodological implementations were put in place. I also felt that I could give back to the Emirati community, who has shared their home with me in the past 5 years, by showing the impact of a frustrating and painful pregnancy experience.

**ESS:** *Where do you see yourself after graduation?*

**NA:** My defense is in a couple of months, therefore I consider this to be a very exciting time for me. I earnestly hope to continue working in the field of maternal and child health with its dearth of research by increasing epidemiological output in this field. Overall, I believe that it is going to be a life-long commitment to learning and ensuring that I do my small part in the betterment of health of individuals and populations alike.

**ESS:** *What is your message to future doctoral students at the Institute?*

**NA:** I would give them the same advice I would have given a younger me. The PhD is a special time for you. It is your time to learn as much as you can and make your impact in the scientific world. Be persistent and resilient! You will transition from being a student to gradually becoming an expert in your field. It will not always be easy but it will definitely be a worthwhile life-long experi-



## MARCH

IPH congratulates the Doctoral Students: Mr Yasin Yasin, Ms Ghuwaya Al Nuaimi, Ms Asma AlMababteh and Ms Tahani Al Qadiri for being accepted at the **Harvard Certificate Program entitled “Introduction to Clinical Research Training” delivered in Dubai.**



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AT AL AIN DAIRY FARMS

The students attending the Occupational Health Course of the Master of Public Health program at IPH, participated in a field visit to the Al Ain Dairy Farms where they had the opportunity to examine the production lines of the factory and assess the workplace for potential occupational hazards. At the conclusion of the visit, the students expressed their enthusiasm for having this unique opportunity of hands-on experience during their Occupational Health course.





## IPH ALUMNI CORNER

Dr. Aysha Ibrahim Al Dhaheri (MBBS; MPH; CPH) is the Section Head of Health Promotion at the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center from the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi and Adjunct Faculty at the IPH.

Dr. Al Dhaheri has Bachelor of Medicine & general surgery (MBBS) and is an IPH alumni from the Master in Public Health (MPH).

Dr. Aysha Ibrahim Al Dhaheri has about 16 years wide experience in public health focusing in health promotion, health education, community health development, community mobilization and health promotion settings, in addition to multiple fields of public health and research. She is acting as a public health advocate for healthy lifestyle and physical activity promotion.

Dr. Al Dhaheri was the 1st UAE nationals to get the Certified Public Health Professionals certificate (CPH) from NBPHE and she is a member of Al Nukbah program under the Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau in the Department of Culture & Tourism.

Dr. Al Dhaheri was the leader for the World Games - Special Olympics 2019 – Healthy Athletes – Health Promotion zone & a Clinical Director for Health Promotion for Special Olympics.

She has received many awards:

- Best Adjunct Clinical Lecturer at IPH (2015 & 2019);
- Second Rank of the Department of Health Abu Dhabi (DoH) Excellence Award for the supervision category for 2019.

She represented the Represented Department of Health (DoH) in the 64th World Health Assembly on 17 May – 24 May 2011. Geneva. Switzerland, and the Public Health Division in the first Gulf Health Council Conference in Kuwait 9th- 11th April 2019.

She has been Leading Health Promotion programs implementation (Public Health Forum, Public Health Ambassador, Wellness in the Community, Injury prevention & Oral Health) with successful results as per the strategic plan in the Department of Health Abu Dhabi Since 2015.



In view of the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 epidemic around the world, the Institute of Public Health, in line with the Ministry of Health and the College of Medicine and Health Sciences guidelines has postponed all events planned for the upcoming months. As a result, the **TB Day, the Biostatistics workshop and the Systematic Review and meta-analysis workshop** have been postponed until further notice. In addition, all educational activities will be delivered online through synchronous and asynchronous teaching sessions.

## IPH SOCIAL LIFE



IPH faculty sharing a Mediterranean lunch.



IPH Faculty attending students event.

## MPH ADMISSIONS

**UAEU** United Arab Emirates University  
College of Medicine and Health Sciences

**المعهد العالي للدراسات الصحية**  
الجامعة العربية المتحدة

### Master of Public Health (MPH)

The MPH program is an internationally accredited, part-time, advanced professional degree designed for those working in the health and social care organizations including government departments, insurance, and healthcare services providers. The MPH program is available to graduates in a health-related profession, as well as non-health related graduates.

**WHY TO JOIN MPH?**  
The program is appropriate for those who intend to advance and lead in their career. It will equip students with a broad range of competencies needed for planning, managing, and evaluating healthcare services, and conducting research.

**BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS**  
The MPH program improves the skills, knowledge, effectiveness, and enables employees to fulfil a wide range of roles in public health services and management, health protection, health promotion, occupational and environmental health, and research. To accommodate the needs of student's work commitments, the program is offered on flexible basis.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE**  
Courses are held every 2-4 weeks throughout the semester from Wednesday to Saturday (09:30-17:00). Students can make their own study plans according to their work commitments.

**TYPICAL DURATION (Flexibility is the key)**  
Study for MPH is on a flexible, part-time basis over a minimum of 2 years period.

**TUITION FEE: AED 61,400**  
AED 1,800 per credit (34 x 1,800 = AED 61,200)  
AED 200 Application fee  
Total 61,200 + 200 = AED 61,400

**APPLICATION AND ADMISSION**  
Please visit: [www.uaeu.ac.ae/en/admission/graduate\\_admissions.shtml](http://www.uaeu.ac.ae/en/admission/graduate_admissions.shtml)  
or scan the QR code below or contact Mr Ismail Elkousasi (JPH Postgraduate Administrator)  
Email: [JPH@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:JPH@uaeu.ac.ae)  
Phone: 03 713 7416

Eligible MPH applicants are invited for an interview with Institute of Public Health (IPH) faculty in May.

**Application Deadline: April 30, 2020**

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